

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00

COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-03 SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-03

H-01 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-06 /099 W

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INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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USMISSION GENEVA

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FOR EUR LABOR ADVISOR GOOTT AND ARA LABOR ADVISER O'GRADY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, ICFTU, XM

SUBJECT: ICFTU STUDY MISSION WILL ASSESS LATIN AMERICAN POLICY AND

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COURT ARGENTINE CGT

REF: A. EC BRUSSELS 00718 B. LONDON 02126 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY OTTO KERSTEN HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE ICFTU WILL SEND A HIGH LEVEL MISSION TO LATIN AMERICA FOR APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEKS BEGINNING MARCH 12. THE SEVEN-MAN MISSION WILL BE HEADED BY BRITISH TUC LEADER LEN MURRAY AND GERMAN DGB PRESIDENT HEINZ VETTER. THEY WILL VISIT ARGENTIAN, COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA, MEXICO AND VENEZUELA. THE PURPOSE OF THE TRIP IS TO REVIEW THE POLICES AND PROGRAMS OF THE INTERAMERICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WORKERS (ORIT) AND, IN THE CASE OF ARGENTINA, TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF THE ARGENTINE CGT AFFILIATING DIRECTLY WITH THE ICFTU AND THUS BYPASSING THE ORIT. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY KERSTEN, THE DELEGATION OF ICFTU LEADERS SCHEDULED TO MAKE A FIVE NATION TOUR OF LATIN AMERICA NEXT MONTH WILL BE THE HIGHEST LEVEL ICFTU DELEGATION TO EVER MAKE SUCH A TRIP. IN ADDITION TO MURRAY AND VETTER, THE DELEGATION WILL INCLUDE BRUNO STORTI OF THE ITALIAN CISL, THOMAS NIELSEN OF THE DANISH LO AND MEXICAN CTM GENERAL SECRETARY FIDEL VELASQUEZ. ICFTU PRESIDENT DONALD MACDONALD FROM CANADA AND KERSTEN WILL ALSO BE MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION.

3. IN STRESSING TH IMPORTANCE OF THE TRIP, KERSTEN TOLD THE MISSION LABOR ATTACHE THAT THE ICFTU'S REGIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR LATIN AMERICA, THE ORIT, IS IN SHAMBLES AND THE OBJECT OF INCREASING CONCERN AMONG ICFTU EUROPEAN AFFILIATES. HE SAID THAT AN IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF ORIT POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IS LONG OVERDUE ANYWAY, BUT THAT SERIOUS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ORIT AND THE ICFTU OVER CHILE HAVE BEEN THE PRINCIPAL CAUSE OF THIS HEIGHTENED CONCERN. WHILE THE ICFTU CONDEMNED THE OVERTHROW AND DEATH OF ALLENDE AS WELL AS THE BEHAVIOR OF THE MILITARY JUNTA SINCE THE COUP, THE ORIT, IN THE MINDS OF MANY EUROPEAN TRADE UNION LEADERS, WAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNDISTURBED BY ALLENDE'S BRUTAL REMOVAL, IF NOT OPENLY SYMPATHETIC WITH THE COUP. THE ORIT'S SUBSEQUENT CONDEMNATION OF THE JUNTA'S EXCESSES HAS DONE LITTLE TO DISPEL DEEP RESENTMENT WITH THE ORIT'S INITIAL RESPONSE TO ALLENDE'S DOWNFALL.

4. KERSTEN ALSO CITED THE CAUSE OF THE PARAGUAYAN CPT, ONE OF "SEVERAL PAPER UNIONS" AFFILIATED TO

ORIT, AS ANOTHER OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH MUST BE CONSIDERED BY THE HIGH LEVEL MISSION AND HOPEFULLY RESOLVED AT THE ICFTU WORLD CONGRESS IN MEXICO CITY NEXT OCTOBER.

5. KERSTEN CONSIDERS THE ARGENTINE PORTION OF THE MISSION'S ITINERARY TO BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. HE NOTED THAT THERE ARE NO PROVISIONS IN THE ICFTU CONSTITUTION WHICH WOULD PREVENT THE CGT OF ARGENTINA FROM AFFILIATING DIRECTLY WITH THE ICFTU WITHOUT FIRST JOINING THE ORIT. KERSTEN SAID THAT SINCE THE ARGENTINES WILL NEVER AGREE TO AFFILIATE WITH THE ICFTU IF MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORIT IS MADE A CONDITION OF AFFILIATION, DIRECT AFFILIATION MAY BE THE ONLY WAY OF BRINGING LATIN AMERICA'S LARGEST NATIONAL TRADE UNION CENTER INTO THE INTERNATIONAL. HE SAID THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SENTIMENT FOR SUCH A MOVE IN THE CGT HIERARCHY.

6. WHEN ASKED IF THE ICFTU IS CONTEMPLATING MAKING ANY SIGNIFICANT STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE ORIT, KERSTEN SAID SUCH A DETERMINATION COULD NOT BE MADE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE HIGH LEVEL MISSION IS CONCLUDED AND ITS FINDINGS ANALYZED. HE ADDED THAT SUCH CHANGES ARE NOT NOW UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION.

7. KERSTEN ALSO TOLD US THAT A SECOND MISSION COMPOSED OF ICFTU SECRETARIAT AND ORIT OFFICIALS WILL MAKE A SIMILAR TRIP IN MAY OR JUNE. ONE OF THE PRIMARY PURPOSES OF THIS FOLLOW-UP MISSION, HE SAID, WOULD BE TO DIRECTLY INVOLVE LATIN AMERICAN TRADE UNION LEADERS IN THE PLANNING OF THE ICFTU'S WORLD CONGRESS IN MEXICO.

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8. COMMENT: SINCE LATIN AMERICA WILL LIKELY BE ON THE AGENDA OF THE BRITISH TUC DELEGATION WHEN IT MEETS WITH THE AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN MIAMI (SEE REFTEL B), THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO APPRISE LEE AND MCLELLAN OF THE AFL-CIO OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS. GREENWALD

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